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Information campaign for the Second World Assembly on Ageing carried out by the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat

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I. Introduction

1. The promotional campaign of the Department of Public Information of the United Nations Secretariat for the Second World Assembly on Ageing emphasizes that ageing is an issue that affects every society and the life of every individual, and that the ageing of our societies should be viewed as an achievement that presents new opportunities that must be exploited.

2. The promotional campaign for the World Assembly faces a communications challenge. At a time when numerous other conferences have been and are taking place, and in a competitive news scene, the campaign must first build awareness throughout the world that the Assembly is taking place, and then that a successful outcome can make a real contribution to the global society. Specifically, the current focus of the campaign is on:

- Projecting a strong message, based on the slogan "Building a society for all ages";
- Building awareness that the rapid ageing of the global population is a trend with implications for all people and all countries, and that over the next 50 years the developing world will also face new and competing challenges;
- Building awareness that the work of the United Nations in the field of ageing, and specifically the outcome of the Summit, can and will have a concrete and beneficial impact for all society.

3. Another challenge that the promotional campaign faces is that ageing is perceived primarily as a negative issue, particularly in youth-oriented developed countries. For that reason, emphasis should be placed on the positive, stressing that ageing is an achievement of the twenty-first century, and that actions can be taken, both on societal and individual levels, to take advantage of that development. The fact that ageing is an inter-generational issue should also be stressed.

4. Based on the draft international plan of action on ageing, submitted on 29 August 2001, and the results of the first session of the Commission for Social Development acting as the preparatory committee for the World Assembly, the Department, in collaboration with the substantive secretariat for the Assembly — the Programme on Ageing of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs — as well as with United Nations agencies, has been further pinpointing specific aspects of the promotional campaign. Within the broader issue of global ageing, there are more specific themes, such as health and gender, to be promoted.

5. The campaign is paying special attention to developing countries and the way in which the ageing of the population is having an impact on them, particularly in the context of widespread poverty and the demanding priority of HIV/AIDS. The campaign's promotional materials reflect that emphasis, and a particular effort is being made to reach out to NGOs in those countries. NGOs are essential partners in building awareness of the Assembly. They have done an enormous amount of work in the field of ageing, and are fully included in the promotional campaign and kept abreast of United Nations activities. They have vast resources that can be enlisted to amplify the impact of the campaign.

6. Two Goodwill Ambassadors have been appointed especially for the Assembly — Marcel Marceau, the world-renowned mime artist, and Her Royal Highness Infanta Cristina of Spain. Their visibility on the issue of ageing can be put to excellent use in drawing attention to the World Assembly.

7. In his Staff Day address on 30 November 2001, the Secretary-General listed the Assembly as one of the four 2002 conferences requiring priority attention. Later that day, in a press conference at Headquarters, the President of Spain, José María Aznar, confirmed that the Secretary-General would open the Assembly in Madrid, one more demonstration of the importance being accorded to the event.

II. Communication focus

8. Several specific messages are critical to the success of the Assembly:

- That global population ageing concerns and has implications for everyone — all generations and all countries, both developing and developed;
- That the goal of the Assembly — to build a society for all ages — can be realized;
- That the ageing of our global population is an achievement, and that the inclusion of older people, with their experience, skills and resources, will enrich all societies.

9. Three priority directions have been identified to guide policy development on the issue of individual and population ageing. Those three themes — development for an ageing world, advancing health and well-being into old age, and ensuring enabling and supportive environments — are guiding the communication strategy.

10. Finally, a number of central themes, which also run through previous United Nations declarations, commitments and programmes, have been identified for discussion and action on the regional and national levels. Those themes underscore useful goals to be highlighted in the information campaign, namely:

- Achieving secure ageing, including reaffirming the goal of eradicating poverty in old age and building on the United Nations Principles for Older Persons;
- Empowering older persons to participate fully and effectively in the social, economic and political lives of their societies;
- Providing opportunities for individual development, self-fulfilment and well-being throughout life, as well as in late life;
- Guaranteeing the economic, social and cultural rights of older persons, as well as their civil and political rights;
- Committing to gender equality in older persons through the elimination of gender-based discrimination;
- Combating and preventing abuse against older persons;
- Building recognition of the crucial importance of inter-generational interdependence, solidarity and reciprocity to social development;
- Providing health care and support for older people;
- Facilitating partnership among all levels of government, civil society, the private sector and older persons themselves in translating into practical action the international strategy for action on ageing — the document to be adopted at the World Assembly;
- Harnessing scientific research and expertise to focus on the individual, social and health implications of ageing, particularly within developing countries.

III. Communication activities: progress to date

11. The logo for the Summit was launched at a press conference in February 2001. It is available on the United Nations web site in English, French and Spanish; the Arabic, Russian and Chinese versions will be available shortly. The logo is being used on all public information materials, and may be used freely by NGOs and others to promote the conference.

12. A press booklet of fact sheets and backgrounders in English was initially distributed to media and participants at the first session of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee in February 2001. It was also distributed to participants at the observance of the International Day for Older Persons, on 4 October 2001, and has been used at other NGO local events. The French version was posted on the Summit web site shortly thereafter. The United Nations information centre in London was provided with copies of the booklet to use in their observance of the International Day. Funding was provided to the United Nations information centre in Madrid to print the Spanish version of the booklet and to distribute it to centres in other Spanish-speaking countries. The United Nations information centre in Moscow is in the process of printing a Russian-language version of the booklet, which will be posted on the Summit web site. Chinese and Arabic translations are being prepared, and will be made available on the Internet.

13. The Department has prepared a compilation video of five *UN in Action* television reports on the work of the United Nations for older persons, which was distributed to the United Nations information centres. It has also packaged a 20-minute video that includes footage from the First World Assembly on Ageing.

14. A press conference was organized to announce the appointment of Marcel Marceau as Goodwill Ambassador on 26 April 2001.

15. Thirty-second public service announcements featuring Mr. Marceau, in English and French, for both television and radio, were produced. They were initially distributed to United Nations information centres in London, Tokyo, Moscow, Paris, Sydney and

Madrid to coincide with Mr. Marceau's performance schedule. They will be distributed to other information centres in the near future. The television announcement is being distributed to major broadcasters in the United States, where ABC, in particular, has indicated that it will air it.

16. Announcements have also been distributed to journalists participating in two journalist programmes, the Department's broadcasters and journalists programme, and the "Age Boom Academy", funded by the New York Times Company Foundation and organized by the International Longevity Center, which was held in October 2001.

17. Special print announcements have been produced and placed in *Modern Maturity* and in two Spanish magazines: *Senda, la revista de los Senior*, and *Jubilo. Modern Maturity* is an American Association of Retired Persons publication, with a subscription circulation of 20 million, one of the highest circulations of all United States magazines.

18. A United Nations conference web site (www.un.org/ageing) in English and Spanish was launched in August 2001, with the French site launched in November 2001. As material is now available in Arabic, Chinese and Russian, those web sites are expected to be functioning shortly. In addition, web sites have been set up by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (www.un.org/esa/socdev/ageing/waa), by the host country (www.madrid2002-envejecimiento.org) and by the NGO Committee on Ageing (www.globalaging.org/waa2).

19. Two *World Chronicle* programmes, one featuring Mr. Marceau and one featuring Mr. Aurelio Fernandez Lopez, Commissioner of the organizing Committee in Madrid, were taped in October and December 2001. *World Chronicle* is a 30-minute television interview programme produced by United Nations Television. It is aired on stations throughout the United States, and is distributed through United Nations information centres worldwide.

20. United Nations Radio interviewed Marcel Marceau for its French daily broadcast in April 2001. A radio interview with Dr. Alexandre Kalache, Chief of the Department of Ageing at the World Health Organization, on the Assembly was featured in Portuguese in April 2001. The "Caribbean News Round-Up" featured an item in October 2001 entitled "Saint Lucia on behalf of CARICOM member countries discussing the issues of ageing, disabled and the family." The French service produced a programme for the International Day of Older Persons, 1 October 2001, and an interview with Odile Frank, Chief of the Social Integration Branch of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, on problems facing older persons. Two programmes entitled "Marcel Marceau: Goodwill Ambassador on Ageing" and "Ageing: advantages and disadvantages" were produced in Russian in January 2002.

21. The appointment of Her Royal Highness Infanta Cristina of Spain as Goodwill Ambassador for the World Assembly was announced on 4 October 2001. A press release in French and English was issued and distributed globally with the Goodwill Ambassador's videotaped message for dissemination among local media. The videotaped message, the press release and a photograph were also made available on the United Nations conference web site and provided to the Reuters and AP news services.

22. The International Day of Older Persons was observed in New York on 4 October 2001. Because of the events of 11 September 2001, the observance was moved out of Headquarters to the location of the American Association of Retired Persons, to allow for NGO participation. The Under-Secretary-General of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, the Chairman of the Group of 77, other permanent representatives and Marcel Marceau spoke at the event, which was successful and well attended.

23. On 24 October 2001, Mr. Marceau offered to the United Nations a performance as part of the United Nations Day Concert.

24. A photo exhibit entitled "Ageing through the eyes of youth" is being prepared in cooperation with United Nations information centres. It features photographs taken by children with captions depicting what ageing means to them. The exhibit will be incorporated into the 1999 International Year of Older Persons Department of Public Information exhibit, which is being updated to coincide with the World Assembly.

IV. Additional information materials

25. The following information materials will be produced by the end of March 2002:

- A new press kit, including fact sheets from United Nations specialized agencies and programmes, backgrounders on key issues and trends, and country profiles featuring best practices;
- A four-colour poster in six languages;
- A four-colour brochure in English, French and Spanish. The Arabic, Chinese and Russian versions will be produced in collaboration with United Nations information centres;
- A postal cancellation stamp with the conference logo and the slogan "The UN works to build a society for all ages", designed in cooperation with the "UN Works" programme, to be used by the United Nations Postal Administration. This stamp will be used by United Nations post offices to cancel postage stamps on outgoing United Nations mail, and will help to raise awareness about the Assembly;
- The Department will continue to disseminate public service announcements for television, radio and print, featuring the Goodwill Ambassadors. It will rely in part on United Nations information centres to disseminate the announcements. Media organizations will also be contacted directly;
- A performance by Mr. Marceau at the Assembly itself is currently being discussed as a possibility;
- United Nations Television will produce video news releases ("B-rolls");
- United Nations Radio will prepare features on ageing issues, with personalities and experts;
- Press releases and related material will be issued for upcoming promotional activities and news events;
- The quarterly magazine *UN Chronicle* will cover the Summit in its first issue of 2002.

V. "UN Works" programme

26. The Department's "UN Works" programme tells the stories of real people and how they have been positively affected by the work carried out by the United Nations. Poster, billboard and web campaigns are designed to project the Organization's global mission and its impact on the lives of real people. In particular:

- The programme is developing personal stories of older people impacted by United Nations programmes related to ageing. These will emphasize the message that the Organization is working to "build a society for all ages". Stories will be featured on the "UN Works" web site at www.un.org/works leading up to and during the World Assembly;
- "UN Works" is also planning an outdoor advertising campaign in Madrid for the Assembly, in cooperation with the host country. The campaign will put a human face on the Summit to highlight its relevance and importance for all generations. The visuals will feature real people.

VI. Special projects involving United Nations information centres

27. The work of United Nations information centres will be essential to build worldwide awareness of the Assembly and the issues before it. The centres have been involved since last year in the information campaign. The United Nations information centre in Madrid, due to its location in the Assembly's host country, has taken an especially active role — from organizing press conferences to assisting with the launch of Her Royal Highness Infanta Cristina as Goodwill Ambassador. In particular:

- United Nations information centres are taking part in the production of the photo exhibit entitled "Ageing through the eyes of youth" mentioned above;
- United Nations information centres have been and will continue to be instrumental in disseminating public service announcements featuring the two Goodwill Ambassadors to local television, radio and print media. Funding has been made available to centres to prepare translations into local languages. The print announcements can then be distributed through local publications;
- United Nations information centres will be instrumental in soliciting and placing Op-Ed pieces written by prominent individuals — particularly people who have high visibility locally. In some cases, United Nations

information centre staff may write the article. Op-Ed pieces written by United Nations officials will also be placed in additional publications through the centres;

- A postcard campaign featuring real people will put a human face on the Summit. The campaign will be disseminated through United Nations information centres and NGOs around the world, to achieve the broadest possible reach.

VII. Special projects involving NGOs

28. The campaign is also involving NGOs, with the support of the NGO Committee on Ageing. In particular:

- NGOs will be asked to solicit and place Op-Ed pieces. Because of their status, NGOs can express controversial positions and seek to encourage debate, which can be implemented through known personalities who have special relationships within their communities;
- NGOs will be instrumental in the successful implementation of the postcard campaign described above.

VIII. Media contact

29. Press conferences to publicize the Assembly continue to be held, for instance at the sessions of the Commission acting as the preparatory committee or when one of the Goodwill Ambassadors visits New York. If the Goodwill Ambassadors travel and are willing, other briefings or appearances can be scheduled at United Nations information centres. Public service announcements (TV, radio and print) can be placed to coincide with their travel.

30. Other action includes:

- Special contacts with media that focus on ageing and population issues;
- Op-Ed pieces written by United Nations officials and experts in the field of ageing;
- Well-known personalities or relevant columnists could be identified and placed on television morning programmes and daytime talk shows, on which family issues are addressed. Daytime audiences, which include older people and stay-at-home mothers and fathers, would be a good target audience. NGOs and United Nations information centres could assist in that initiative.

IX. Institutional arrangements

31. *Coordination with the secretariat of the Assembly*: the Department has been working closely with the Division for Social Policy and Development of the Secretariat in planning and implementing the global public awareness campaign.

32. *United Nations information centres and services*: continued liaison with United Nations information centres and services is crucial. They are assisting with promotional activities and liaison with local media.

33. *United Nations communication group coordination*: a United Nations communication group ad hoc meeting for the Assembly was held on 10 January 2002 to facilitate and coordinate system-wide promotion of the Assembly. The information units of all United Nations specialized agencies, programmes and funds have been involved in the campaign. They have provided background articles for the press kit.

34. *NGO participation*: the Department will continue to work closely with the NGO Committee on Ageing, which has been actively engaged in promoting the Assembly to the NGO community.